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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 16TH INFANTRY
(1ST INFANTRY DIVISION) IN THE INVASION OF NORTH
AFRICA. (ORAN, ALGERIA) 8-11 NOVEMBER, 1942
(THE ALGERIA-FRENCH MOROCCO CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Battalion Adjutant)

Type of operation described: AMPHIBIOUS LANDING

Captain Stephen V. Ralph, Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO 1

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INTRODUCTION

Early in the summer of 1942, the War in Europe had reached what Prime Minister Churchill described as "Our darkest moments". Rommel had driven the British Forces back in Egypt almost to Alexandria. The "Summer Offensive" had brought their Army to Stalingrad. In the Atlantic and Mediterranean waters, German submarine activity was taking an ever mounting toll in Allied ships.

The Russian Government had repeatedly insisted on an immediate opening of the Second Front, to relieve the terrific pressure in Eastern Europe. The Allied Nations, appreciative of Russia's position, had been unable as yet to gather sufficient strength to launch such an offensive.

In January 1942, Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff, met in Washington. (1) The object of their meeting was to discuss the Allied possibilities. In spite of the darkness of the outlook, it was decided that consideration and planning would go forward, aimed at an amphibious assault in the Cherbourg area sometime during 1942. (2) Detailed preparation started, and within a few months it became apparent that the vast amount of ships, aircraft, men and equipment needed, could not possibly be secured in time.

The following June another meeting took place in Washington. In view of the proposed offensive at El Alemein in the early fall, and the guarantee of success which it offered, it was decided to devote all effort to consideration of a North Africa landing. Within a month the plan was drawn up, accepted, and turned over to the Military Leaders. (3)

STRATEGIC PLAN

The North Africa Landings would reopen the British supply line to the Middle and Far East, and would expand Allied activity in the war against the Axis. It would further secure our position while gathering strength

(1) A-4-P.18 (2) A-4-P.18 (3) A-4-P.18

to attack the Germans in Europe. It would also remove the constant threat of German activity in West Africa. (4)

Furthermore, if our occupation could be carried out without antagonizing the French troops and authorities in North Africa, it would inaugurate the revival of the French spirit and hatred of the Germans. Her Army could be reborn, and the ground work laid for our invasion of Europe. (5)

Axis apprehension relative to the position of the French Colonies in Africa was evidenced by the French radio in October, in which it was forecast that the Allies planned to invade North Africa. Berlin radios further indicated German suspicion, early in November, by a similar broadcast. In both cases, Dakar was selected as the probable point. Their awareness had also been evidenced by an inspection tour by Admiral Darlan, early in October. (6)

In preparation for the Second Front, it was realized by the Allied Leaders that even though the invasion of North Africa would provide only a secondary theater, it was within the capabilities of the limited power of the Allies. It offered a point from which further moves could be launched. (7)

The plan, as adopted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in July 1942, called for the initial effort to be made by American forces; with the Royal Navy, British Merchant Fleet and R.A.F. support. (8) This was necessary in view of the strained relations resulting from the strong measures used by the British fleet at Mers-El-Kebir and Dakar in 1940 and 1941, and the recent combined operations on the Island of Madagascar and in Syria. This resentment was of course enlivened by the Germans, and provided too much of a gamble for the initial use of British Ground troops. (9)

The original plan specified three separate task forces, the "Eastern", "Central", and "Western". These task forces were to be composed of American Ground troops which would sail from England and the United States, supported by United States and British Navies and Air Forces. The objectives chosen were Casa Blanca, Oran, Algiers, Bone, Philipville and Tunis. Due to the lack of shipping, the latter three had to be disregarded. (10) The objective of the Central Task Force was to be the Oran area. (Map A)

(4) A-4 P.18 (5) A-5 P.18 (6) A-1 P.40 (7) A-4 P.18 (8)-(9) Personal Knowledge
(10) A-4 P.18

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORAN AREA (11)

Oran is the second largest City in Algeria. It is closest to France and is one of the most important shipping centers along the North African Coast. It has an excellent artificial harbor, and with the harbor at Mers-El-Kebir, a few miles to the east, comprises one of the best Naval bases in the Mediterranean.

The coastal region of North Africa is characterized by pronounced geographic and climatic changes. The summers are hot and dry, with heavy persistent rainfall in winter.

Parallel to the coast, at a distance varying from thirty-five to seventy-five miles, are the Atlas Mountains, a high range extending from Tunisia to Algeria.

From the mountains to the coast lies one of the most fertile plains in the world. Low and rolling, interspersed with numerous low salt marsh areas, (Map C) this plain is intensively farmed and produces a variety and abundance of grains, fruits and vegetables. It has been said that Algeria is the breadbasket of France, for the bulk of the produce is shipped to the motherland. In return Algeria provides an unlimited market for French manufactured goods, since there is no industry in North Africa.

The population of the area is predominately Arab, with Europeans comprising approximately 10% of the total. France has governed Algeria for over one hundred years. Prior to that time the Spaniards enjoyed the rule over almost all of North Africa. The present European population is a mixture of Spanish and French, both languages being spoken.

ENEMY SITUATION

In peacetime, the French had maintained an important force in North Africa. That force, considerably augmented by the necessities of war had formed a large part of the Army of France that was defeated by the German Army in 1940. (12)

Some part of it, repatriated in the days following the collapse, returned to North Africa, but the Armistice terms reduced it to a strength (11) A-7, Personal Knowledge (12)(13)(14)(15) A-5 P.5, Personal Knowledge

barely sufficient to enable it to put down any Anti-Vichy revolution. (13)

In the Department of Oran, there were approximately 50,000 troops, composed mainly of infantry. There were very few tanks, artillery and vehicles, and these were of the type in use during and after the First World War. Neither the German Conquerors or the Vichy Government would permit much in the way of armed readiness, for fear that the weapons and strength would be used against the master. (14)

The French Naval Bases at Mers-El-Kebir, Oran and Arzew were still being maintained in a state of readiness. Under German orders, the French Navy was permitted to keep the remains of her fleet. These ships were berthed at North African ports but were not permitted at sea. (15)

POLITICAL SITUATION (16)

The sentiment of the French people towards the United States was exceedingly favorable. We had continued to maintain diplomatic relations, and particularly in North Africa, we had continuously shipped a steady supply of foodstuffs to the people. Members of our diplomatic staffs had personally supervised distribution. These gestures assisted materially in laying the ground work for a meeting of General Clark and members of the French General Staff near Algiers in October. Everything pointed to little resistance by the French Armed forces in the North African Colonies. It was felt by the Allied High Command that whether or not our landing were opposed, our speed and modern equipment would overcome any resistance. We had many friends in North Africa, but the influence of the Vichy Government made the situation ticklish and uncertain.

CENTRAL TASK FORCE

With the development of the plans for invasion, Command of the Central Task Force was given to Major General Lloyd Fredendall. It was to consist of 39,000 troops; the First Infantry Division, Combat Command "B" of the First Armored Division, First Ranger Battalion, Second Battalion (13)(14)(15) A-5 P.5, Personal Knowledge (16) A-1 P.40

of the Five Hundred Third Parachute Regiment and Corp troops. The entire sea lift and warship escort was to be provided by the Royal Navy.

The mission assigned to the Center Task Force was as follows: (17)

1. To occupy Port and adjacent airfields at Oran.
2. In conjunction with the Western Task Force, to establish and maintain communications between Oran and Casa Blanca.
3. In conjunction with the Western Task Force, to build up land and air striking forces ready to contain Spanish Morocco, if this action should become necessary.
4. Establish and maintain communications between Oran and Orleansville in conjunction with the Eastern Task Force.

PREPARATIONS FOR INVASION

The First Division, selected to play the major role in the accomplishment of the mission of the Central Task Force, had received extensive training in Amphibious Warfare. During 1940 and 1941, it had participated in practice exercises under the supervision of the Navy Department and the newly formed Atlantic Force Atlantic Fleet. These landings had been made at Puerto Rico, North Carolina, Chesapeake Bay, and Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.

In early August 1942, the Division moved to England and to Tidworth Barracks. After a brief stay of six weeks, the Division was moved by rail to Roseneath, Scotland, and placed aboard various troopships in the Firth of Clyde. This move was accomplished under great secrecy by moving battalions separately to the loading area.

We were given no information as to what experience was in store for us, although everyone knew that it was to be something definite. Naturally there was much speculation as to where we were going. The strongest rumors favoring Norway or West Africa.

By the First of October the Division had closed in the vicinity of Roseneath. The ships on which the Division was loaded carried from 1,000 to 2,500 troops. These ships were dispersed within an area of about ten square miles.

In the case of the Second Battalion, Sixteenth Infantry, we boarded the "Reina Del Pacifico" on the twenty-third of September. Within the following three weeks, we successfully transferred to the "Orbeda" and to the "Duchess of Bedford."

Our Regimental Headquarters was located ashore at Roseneath, together with Headquarters and Service Companies. Communication was difficult as no facilities had been provided. The only means for transmission of messages was by Navy blinker from ship to Naval Headquarters at Gurock across the bay, then to Naval Headquarters at Roseneath. This channel usually took from one to two days to clear. Occasionally we were able to send staff officers ashore by visiting courier boats, but in such cases, it was very indefinite as to when the return trip could be made.

During our stay in the Firth of Clyde, we were continuously kept in the dark as to the plan or target. We later learned that this information had been withheld from all but Regimental Commanders for security reasons. This prevented any planning on a Battalion or Company level.

Gradually the troops were reshuffled among ships, and on the twenty-third of October, after one month of waiting, we sailed out of the mouth of the Clyde and proceeded in a north westerly direction. After an indefinite course for the next few days we found our ourselves in warmer waters.

✓ On the fifth of November the ship's Captains delivered to each Battalion Commander a sealed envelope which contained the secret orders for Operation "Torch". (18)

We learned that our destination was Oran. Maps, details, orders and coordinations were revealed and work was started on the necessary briefings, and small unit planning.

We learned that the Second Battalion was to be "Floating Reserve", under the control of the Task Force Commander and would land on his order.

(18) A-9, Personal Knowledge

MISSIONS OF SUB FORCES

The missions of the Sub Forces were as follows: (Map B)

1. "X" Beach, Merzat Bouzedjar; the Special Armored Force, made up of units of Combat Command "B" First Armored Division. To land, proceed inland, capture and secure La Senia Airfield to the south of Oran. Protect arrival of units of the Twelfth Air Force. (19)
 2. "Y" Beach, Les Andalous; the Twenty-Sixth Regimental Combat Team; to land, capture the heights of Djebel Murdjadjo and the City of Oran from the west. (20)
 3. "Z" Beach, Arzew:
 - a. Sixteenth Regimental Combat Team (less Second Battalion). To land on designated beach with two Battalion landing teams abreast, First on the left and Third on the right. The First Battalion to capture Damesme, St. Leu, Port aux Poules, secure beach and southern flank of Division zone. (21)
 - b. Eighteenth Regimental Combat Team. To land on right of "Z" Beach with two Battalion landing teams abreast, with one Battalion in reserve. To proceed to and capture City of Oran from east.
 - c. Combat Command "B" First Armored Division. To land at daylight, proceed inland to assist Second Battalion, Five Hundred and Third Parachute Regiment in the capture of Tafaroui Airfield.
 4. Tafaroui Airfield; Second Battalion, 503RD Parachute Regiment to make an airborne landing in the vicinity of field, capture and secure for immediate use of units of Twelfth Air Force. (22)
 5. Oran Harbor; Third Battalion Sixth Armored Infantry. To enter harbor aboard two British cutters, capture and secure all defenses, ships and equipment. Prevent sabotage. (23)
- (19) A-7 P.9 (20) A-18 (21) A-9,10,12,15,16. (22) A-9 (23) A-5 P.7 A-11

6. Arzew Harbor; First Ranger Battalion. To enter harbor, capture and secure harbor defences, and enemy defences on high ground overlooking harbor. (24)

MISSION OF 2ND BN. 16TH INFANTRY

The Second Battalion, having no specific assigned mission, received instructions to carefully study all missions of all the Sub Forces with particular emphasis on the following. (24)

1. If the French Armed Forces in the Oran area capitulated, a single searchlight would be aimed straight in to the air, in which event we would sail into Oran Harbor, secure all harbor installations, communications, police headquarters, railroad stations and military establishments in the city.

In the accomplishment of this task, each Company was given specific targets to capture and secure. Companies further designated platoons for particular locations throughout the city.

2. To take over and accomplish the assigned mission of the eighteenth Regimental Combat Team in the event that this was necessary.
3. To take over and accomplish the assigned mission of the First or Third Battalion of the Sixteenth Infantry in the event that this should become necessary.

The Story?
On the night 6-7 November we sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar. The following day was without incident, although everyone was apprehensive of Axis submarines or air attack, since it was certain that our arrival could not have gone undetected.

LANDINGS

On 7 November at 2300 hours, we dropped anchor about fourteen miles off Arzew. (25) From this distance the shore was not visible as the night was very dark. The sea was extremely calm and ideal for a landing.

President Roosevelt's message to the French people was being heard over the ships radio at midnight. The French were being told that the landing was taking place. This created a strange sensation, for at this time our First Battalion was loading its landing craft and being lowered (24) A.-9,12 (25) A.11

into the water, still fourteen miles from shore.

We watched the landing craft rendezvous off our bow and start for shore.

It is difficult to describe the feelings that everyone had when those landing craft started for the beach. We were a fighting force, thousands of miles from home and about to enter a strange country. We had never felt anything but kindness towards the French. In the last war they had been our Allies and only two years ago we had felt the tragedy when they were ground under the heel of the German Army. Now we were landing on their shores as an aggressor force. We had been cautioned that this could be a peaceful landing, but it is difficult for a soldier to understand that, when he has been given extra ammunition, and told to be prepared. On the other hand, the French were bound to feel as our soldiers did. They could not possibly understand our reasons for being here; nor could they, as soldiers, willfully disobey the orders which they received to fight the aggressor. It was a question on both sides of "Shoot first and ask questions afterwards".

After the disembarkation of the First Battalion, our landing craft devoted their efforts to the unloading of other ships. At approximately 0300 hours our ship weighed anchor and drew in closer to shore. From this point we could detect almost no activity in the Arzew area.

Shortly after 0300 there was considerable artillery fire to our west, indicating that the Sixth Armored Infantry was encountering difficulty at Oran.

Since we had no means of communication with the beach, it was impossible to learn anything of the situation. Our Battalion S-2, Lt. Donald Kellett had gone ashore with the First Battalion but was not expected to return until daylight.

For the remainder of the night we watched from the deck of the ship and with the dawn were able to pick out the landmarks which we had studied so thoroughly on our maps.

At 0700 Lt. Kellett returned from his reconnaissance and reported to Lt. Col. Crawford, Second Battalion Commander. The landing had been effected without opposition. Our First Battalion had captured Damesme, St. Leu and Port aux Poules. They were maintaining defensive positions to the south of Port aux Poules to protect the buildup of the beachhead. Our Third Battalion was in position south of St. Cloud. The eighteenth Infantry had landed, and throughout the night had been engaged in overcoming light resistance in Arzew and were now on the march, proceeding to St. Cloud. (26)

Lt. Kellett had contacted Regimental Headquarters but had been unable to secure permission for our Battalion to land, or any indication as to our employment.

On the left sector of the beach, we could see the armored equipment of Combat Command "B" landing and proceeding inland to their assembly area.

As the morning passed, Lt. Col. Crawford grew more impatient at the delay in orders which would permit our Battalion to land. He was able to make arrangements with the British Navy Flotilla Commander for landing craft, and decided to take the Battalion ashore, rather than wait until the campaign was over. To assist in the move, the Master of the Duchess edged the ship in toward the beach, until we were aground three hundred yards from shore.

Within an hour the entire Battalion was ashore and in the predesignated assembly area on the high ground overlooking the beach.

A temporary Command Post was established in a small olive grove and within thirty minutes the Regimental Commander appeared. We were ordered to proceed into Oran along the route on the south of the Division. We learned that the only resistance which had been encountered was at St. Cloud. The Eighteenth Infantry was attacking the town from the northwest, but ~~that~~ the resistance was very stubborn. Strangely enough, one company of our Third Battalion had passed through the town without (27) incident during the night and was now disposed to the south of St. Cloud.

(26) A-12 (27) A-9

There was no word as to how the forces to the west of Oran were progressing.

The Battalion began the march with "E" Company leading, ~~etc~~ followed by "F" , "G", Hqs. and "H"., proceeding along the hard surfaced highway. We continued until 2300 hours at which time a halt was made on Regimental orders. "E" Company was placed in position on the high ground in the vicinity of Fluerus, "F" Company at Le Grande, and "G" Company in rear of Road Junction #89. The Battalion C.P. and Company "H" were just north of the cross road. (28)

At midnight Lt. Col. Crawford received orders to prepare for an armored attack which might develop, from the south, at daybreak. The necessary instructions were given to the Company Commanders, and the Battalion attempted to get what rest it could.

It might be well, at this point, to relate a few of the difficulties which the Battalion was experiencing. For six and one half weeks the troops had been confined aboard ship without opportunity for exercise. This, coupled with the British diet, which they were given, resulted in their being in extremely poor physical condition. After the fifteen mile march we had just completed, the men were completely exhausted.

In addition, each man was carrying on his back an unduly heavy load. It consisted of a light pack, British gas cape, gas impregnated underwear, shoe impregnate, BAL ointment, Halyzone tablets, dust respirator, goggles, a wool undershirt, three C and one D ration, gas mask, two canteens of water, two extra units of fire per weapon and hand grenades. The uniform was impregnated, ~~also~~ our socks, shoes, leggins, wool O.D. shirt and trousers. We had been led to believe that all of this equipment would be necessary, but at this point it seemed unjustified, particularly in view of the vast quantities which had been discarded along our route of march. It had all of the appearance of a Supply Sergeants nightmare. (29)

Throughout the night we attempted to contact our companies and Regiment by radio. Either because there were no sets operating or due to the
(28) A-12, A-13 (29) A-10

inadequacy of the SCR #288 and British #18, we failed completely.

D PLUS I (Maps C and D)

Early the following morning, D plus 1, 9 November, we prepared for the rumored armored attack. Nothing materialized and we moved out on Regimental order at 1000 hours. Along the way we commandeered a wood burning bus, two horses and carts, and a mule to assist in carrying the terrific burden of extra ammunition and equipment. The bus promptly exhausted its fuel supply and we were forced to abandon it.

With the reassembling of the Battalion on the road we were informed that the Eighteenth Infantry, less one Battalion, was to by pass St. Cloud, and would proceed to Oran by way of the Oran-Arzew road. This would place the Second and Third Battalion, Sixteenth Infantry and the Eighteenth Combat Team abreast.

The Second Battalion proceeded down the road with "F" Company leading followed by "G", "E", Hqs. and "H". At 2200 hours we were contacted by Lt. Col. Mathews, Regimental Executive Officer, with orders from Regiment. (30)

There was a farmhouse close to the road, we roused the farmer and were admitted. Our maps were laid out on his table, and with the aid of Algerian wine, we were informed that we were to proceed only to Crossroad #116, and there were to hold up until daylight, at which time the Eighteenth Infantry would proceed into town. This news was received with disappointment by Lt. Col. Crawford.

The Battalion was reformed on the road. It was somewhat disorganized. There was no attempt made to maintain proper interval or tactical formation. A light rain had started to fall and in the darkness it was difficult to see the man ahead. The few horses, mules and carts which we had commandeered were loaded to overwhelming capacity with equipment, with groups of men walking alongside holding the load.

At 2315 hours, as the Point passed the cross road at Ferme St. Jean Baptiste, two enemy machine guns began firing straight down the

(30) A-12

road. From a position slightly to the rear, a light mortar began placing fire on the road.

The entire Battalion sought the ditch on either side, which offered adequate protection. The firing continued for about ten minutes without inflicting much damage.

In order to effect a reorganization it was necessary to move the Battalion back down the ditches for a distance sufficient to allow freedom of movement. In passing the word back to move, a near panic resulted, with men running down the road as fast as possible. It was fully one hour before a reorganization could be completed, and a defense line established astride the road with "G" Company on the right, "F" Company in the center, and "E" Company on the left.

Again we attempted to establish radio communications with Regiment in an effort to secure the assistance of the Regimental Cannon Company. Since we could contact no one, it was necessary to dispatch a messenger to the rear with the request. Fortunately, this messenger was able to find Regiment and at 0300 hours Cannon Company arrived with two self propelled 105 mm Howitzers and two self propelled 75 mm guns. They were promptly placed in position just off the road and proceeded to fire at Ferme St. Jean Baptiste.

One of the rounds, fired, struck a farmhouse, behind which were emplaced our "G" Company mortars, killing two and wounding five members of the crews.

During our bombardment of the enemy positions, there appeared, from our right front, the leading elements of our Third Battalion marching toward our rear. In their advance, no opposition had been encountered and they had continued to the outskirts of Oran, reaching there shortly after midnight. They had received orders to clear their route of march and to proceed later^{al}ly and follow our route of advance. This was in order to clear the road for the Eighteenth Infantry, who were to be accorded the honor of being the first to enter Oran.

D PLUS 2

During this time we received orders from Regiment to attack Oran in the morning (D plus 2) at the same time that the Eighteenth was to enter Oran. This order was based on the assumption that the Second Battalion, Sixteenth Infantry and the Eighteenth Infantry were both at the Division phase line on the outskirts of Oran. Actually neither unit was within four miles of the line. (31)

It was not known, at this time, what constituted the enemy defences to our front, and little was done to find out. It was suspected that it constituted a main line of enemy resistance and plans were made with that in mind.

Preparations were made for the attack. At 0720 hours, with the support of mortars, Cannon Company, and the Fifth Field Artillery Battalion, we jumped off on a three hundred yard front. (32) The attack proceeded rapidly, encountering only light resistance.

The French were emplaced in hastily dug field fortifications supported by a small number of 75 mm guns. They surrendered, as we advanced on their positions, with little resistance.

By 1030 hours the Second Battalion had reached the edge of the city and was met by tanks from the First Armored Division who had entered the city from the south after having completed the occupation of Tafaroui Airfield.

In the lead tank was the French Prefecture of Police for the city of Oran. His wish was that we refrain from bombardment of the city. Unfortunately he did not possess the authority to surrender the city, this being the responsibility of the Military Commander. He was dispatched to the French Headquarters with instructions to the French Commander to surrender the city immediately or we would enter forcibly.

At 1100 hours we received orders from Regiment, that the city would be entered at 1200 hours, with Battalions abreast, 2ND Battalion on the right, First Battalion on the left. Cannon Company, Six-

(31) A-8 (32) A-8

teenth Infantry and the Fifth Field Artillery Battalion were to be in direct support of the Second Battalion; Seventh Field Artillery Battalion to be in direct support of the First Battalion. The Third Battalion to remain in position near Ferme St. Jean Baptiste. (33)

At 1200 hours the attack jumped off and the Battalion entered Oran with Companies abreast on parallel streets proceeding toward the center of the city. Each Company Commander had been ordered, prior to the attack, to proceed to assigned objectives within the city, occupy and secure.

In my particular case, the objective was the "Light Railway Station".

As we proceeded into town, large crowds of civilians lined the streets frantically cheering. My Command consisted of thirty men, one three-quarter ton truck and one platoon from the Regimental Anti-tank Company. So overwhelming was the crowd that it was impossible to maintain any control over the troops. On arriving in the center of the city I enlisted the aid of a French soldier who accompanied me to my objective which turned out to be a small narrow guage railway shed. The railroad ran from a small warehouse to the port of Oran. It consisted of one locomotive and three flat cars.

There had been no resistance during our entry, and I decided that this was as far as I could go. I set up what security was possible, primarily for our protection from the enthusiastic populace, and to keep the few soldiers I had from fraternizing. In spite of my efforts, the situation became impossible. A message was dispatched to Battalion informing Lt. Col. Crawford of our location and we proceeded to prepare for a nights rest. The following morning, Battalion Headquarters was established at the "Gare Central", the main rail station, and some semblance of organization was restored within the Battalion.

Security Patrols were established, guards posted on important centers and road blocks set up.

(33) A-8

At the termination of hostilities it was determined that the Battalion had suffered sixteen killed and about forty-five wounded. We had captured over six hundred prisoners.

CONCLUSIONS

The Invasion of North Africa was an ambitious undertaking. It was the largest sea borne operation ever launched, and served as a basis for the planning of future operations against Europe and in the Pacific.

The political and strategic aspects far overshadowed the tactical employment of Allied forces in the venture. In that respect it was entirely in accord with the mission.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In the planning of this operation, great emphasis was placed on secrecy. It was felt that the end would justify the means. This was illustrated in the results, but completely prevented small unit planning and coordination.

It was expected that show of Allied strength would overcome any willingness on the part of the French to resist. This was perhaps true, but our display of strength was colored by an example of lack of coordination and aggressiveness on the part of small units.

The cooperation between British Navy, Merchant Fleet and American Forces was commendable. Much was learned in the staging and mounting of this operation, and the experience gained was a tremendous asset in later conflicts.

LESSONS LEARNED

Some of the lessons learned by this operation are:

1. In the preparation for an operation necessitating an extended waiting period, it is vitally important to provide exercise, recreation, proper diet, and training for all troops continuously.

2. In the planning for an operation which will involve long and strenuous foot movements, it is necessary to emphasize the reduction of the load carried on an individual's back. In the case of this operation, it does not seem reasonable that the French would have used gas, and it did not seem so at that time, therefore, all gas equipment could have been dispensed with.
3. When officers and troops become fatigued, march discipline and battle fitness decline rapidly. Rigid discipline can overcome such condition, but must be accomplished by good, thorough training.
4. In an operation involving a surprise attack against light resistance, the success of the operation depends upon speed and aggressiveness at all costs.
5. When security reasons necessitate withholding plans and orders for an operation, a calculated lack of coordination must be expected. This can be overcome by the conducting of extensive joint Army-Navy small unit exercises, and in particular Combat Team exercises.
6. The proper use of communications and available means must be good enough to insure continuous communication between all levels of command.
7. Development of initiative in Platoon Leaders and Company Commanders will contribute materially to success and cannot be over emphasized in the preparation for initial combat.